

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 916

By Ferguson

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of John Stanley Wassom of Rockwood.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of John Stanley Wassom; and

WHEREAS, John Wassom was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, the son of the late Jesse and Hazel Wassom, Mr. Wassom was born in Spring City on May 1, 1941. This lifelong citizen of East Tennessee graduated from Spring City High School in 1959, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in biological sciences from Tennessee Technological University in 1963; and

WHEREAS, in pursuit of his post-graduate education, John Wassom matriculated at the University of Tennessee School of Biomedical Sciences at the Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), where he completed courses in genetics; and

WHEREAS, a brave and valorous patriot, Mr. Wassom served as a member of the United States Army Chemical Corps from 1963 until 1965; and

WHEREAS, John Wassom served with acumen and alacrity as a scientist and administrator for more than thirty-eight years at ORNL, in which positions he earned the respect of his peers for the exemplary quality of his work; and

WHEREAS, his work at ORNL included genetic toxicology, mammalian genetics, and computational chemistry, and he served as the director of the Environmental Mutagen and Teratogen Information Centers (EMIC and ETIC), which are supported by the National Institutes

of Health. The EMIC was instrumental in developing GENE-TOX, a critically-reviewed toxicology database which contained genetic tests on more than 3,000 chemicals; and

WHEREAS, a preeminent leader in his field, Mr. Wassom was a founding member of the Environmental Mutagen Society and the originator of the Department of Energy's Low-Dose Radiation Research Program website and the *Human Genome News*, which was distributed worldwide and later expanded to a public technical communication and educational support website for the Human Genome Program; and

WHEREAS, after a storied career during which he became highly respected for his expertise in genetic toxicology, his visionary approaches to bioinformation management, and his support of the genetic toxicology community through environmental toxicology information services, John Wassom retired from ORNL in 2003, whereupon he subsequently joined the staff of YAHSGS and, later, Summitec Corporation; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Mr. Wassom received the Environmental Mutagen Society's Alexander Hollaender Award for contributions to the field of genetic toxicology, and he participated in 104 peer-reviewed publications; and

WHEREAS, a stalwart contributor to the scientific advancement of his field, John Wassom served on the editorial board of *Mutation Research* from 1976 until 1980 and on its board of managing editors from 1981 until 2000, and also stood as a valued member of a number of working groups, including those appointed by the International Agency for Research on Cancer from 1972 until 1985 and the International Committee for Protection Against Environmental Mutagens and Carcinogens from 1972 until 1986; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wassom was also deeply involved in his community, serving on the Rockwood Housing Authority Board for thirty years, standing as the chairman of the Rockwood Industrial Board, serving in the office of Rockwood City Councilman, serving on the Rockwood Electric Utility Board and the Airport Steering Committee, and working for several years alongside his wife, Judy Owings Wassom, in organizing and hosting annual tours of Rockwood's historic homes through Rockwood 2000. John Wassom will be fondly remembered for his portrayal of General John T. Wilder, the founder of Rockwood; and

WHEREAS, he was a devout member of the Rockwood United Methodist Church, which he served for many years; and

WHEREAS, John Wassom was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wassom enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife of forty-six years, Judy, and was the proud father and father-in-law of Zoé and J.J. Neerman; and

WHEREAS, he will be sorely missed by his grandchildren, Jarrod, Joshua, Jackson, and Zoé-Kate Neerman; his sister and brother-in-law, Jackie and Don Hill; and his many extended family members; and

WHEREAS, John Wassom leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of John Stanley Wassom, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Wassom.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.